

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of electronically signing a hypertext markup language form, comprising:
  - loading said hypertext markup language form into a browser application; and
  - generating an electronic signature for information in said hypertext markup language form from within said browser application.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said electronic signature comprises a public key infrastructure digital certificate.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said hypertext markup language form comprises at least one data field.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein said electronic signature is generated for data in said at least one data field.
5. The method of claim 3, further comprising merging data in said at least one data field with said hypertext markup language form to create a merged form.
6. The method of claim 3, wherein said electronic signature is generated for said merged form.
7. The method of claim 1, further comprising attaching said electronic signature to said hypertext markup language form.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein said attaching comprises appending a digital signature onto the end of a file containing said hypertext markup language form in a comment tag.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein said attaching further comprises prepending a text header onto said file in another comment tag.

10. The method of claim 7, further comprising transmitting said hypertext markup language form with said attached electronic signature to a web server.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein said transmitting to said web server comprises transmitting to a web server for processing by a common gateway interface script.

12. A method of verifying an electronic signature of a hypertext markup language form, comprising:

- loading said hypertext markup language form into a browser application;
- generating an electronic signature for information in said hypertext markup language form from within said browser application; and
- comparing said electronic signature with a stored electronic signature in said hypertext markup language form.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising indicating whether said electronic signature matches said stored electronic signature.

14. The method of claim 12, further comprising

displaying information about said stored electronic signature.

15. An apparatus for electronically signing a hypertext markup language form, comprising:

- a. one or more computer readable storage media; and
- b. computer executable program code stored in the one or more computer readable storage media, the computer executable program code comprising:
  - i. code for loading and displaying said hypertext markup language form;
  - ii. code for generating an electronic signature for information in said hypertext markup language form from within a browser; and
  - iii. code for verifying an electronic signature attached to said hypertext markup language form.

16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said code for generating said electronic signature comprises plugin code for said browser.

17. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said code for generating said electronic signature utilizes a public key infrastructure digital certificate.

18. The apparatus of claim 15, further comprising code for transmitting said hypertext markup language form and data in at least one field in said hypertext markup language form to a server.

19. The apparatus of claim 15, further comprising code for merging data in at least one field in said hypertext

markup language form with said hypertext markup language form.

20. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein said code for merging data does not interfere with posting of said at least one field to a server application.

21. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said code for verifying said electronic signature comprises:

1. code for generating a new electronic signature for said information in said hypertext markup language form; and
2. code for comparing said new electronic signature with said electronic signature attached to said hypertext markup language form.

22. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said code for loading and displaying said hypertext markup language form displays said hypertext markup language form in a first frame and displays at least one user interface button in a second frame, said at least one user interface button for initiating said code for generating said electronic signature and said code for verifying said electronic signature.